

## **5.0 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

Section 15126(g) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of a proposed project's potential to foster economic or population growth, including ways in which a project could remove an obstacle to growth. The Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances' potential to induce growth is discussed in this section.

Growth does not necessarily create significant physical changes to the environment. However, depending upon the type, magnitude, and location of growth, it can result in significant adverse environmental effects. The proposed Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances' growth inducing potential could therefore be considered significant if it could result in the extension of infrastructure that could accommodate capacities greater than the growth currently planned.

### **5.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH**

The proposed Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances are intended to strengthen protections on illicit discharges from construction sites and post-construction discharges for specific uses. These new provisions will require additional facilities to handle and treat stormwater, for certain types of projects. Drainage facilities, such as basins and concrete drains, could be constructed in proximity to sensitive noise receptors.

The proposed revisions would also introduce agricultural exemptions and the Alternative Review Process to the Coastal Zone. Presently, most agricultural grading in the Coastal Zone requires grading permit approval.

The proposed revisions would modify the types of projects that can go through the Alternative Review Process. This process is overseen by either a federal agency (NRCS) or local agency (RCDs). Projects which are permitted through this process are also subject to an environmental determination under the same or similar parameters.

Development occurring under the proposed Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances would be consistent with the buildout potential anticipated under the County's General Plan. Therefore, the proposed ordinances would not directly generate jobs or economic activity.

While the proposed ordinance would not, itself, result in an increase in density or intensity of development, it will allow development to continue to occur under existing General Plan parameters. The development that could be added under the General Plan buildout throughout the County would incrementally increase activity in retail establishments and may generate demand for such services as landscaping, gardening, home cleaning, and maintenance. However, new residents are expected to draw on existing retail and commercial services already available in the County, rather than inducing new service providers to relocate to the area. Buildout is expected to occur gradually, which means that the retail and service sector will not be affected by a rapid burst of growth. Gradual growth is ensured through the County's Growth Management Ordinance (Title 26 of the County Code).



As a result of these factors, no significant physical effects are expected to result from economic growth generated by the proposed Grading and Stormwater Management EIR. In a general sense, the proposed ordinance is expected to have beneficial economic effects on local retailers and service providers.

Mitigation Measures. None required.

Significance after Mitigation. No significant environmental impacts relating to economic growth are anticipated.

## **5.2 POPULATION GROWTH**

The population of San Luis Obispo County has been steadily increasing over the past several decades. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of San Luis Obispo County increased approximately 13.6%. The County's population increased another 3.9% between 2000 and 2009. According to the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), San Luis Obispo County's population is projected to continue to increase, reaching 314,567 to 352,496 by the year 2025. This represents an increase of approximately 16 to 30% over the current population of 270,429. It should be noted that SLOCOG's projections are based on the buildout potential of the General Plans of the County and each city within the County.

Overall, the Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances would result in the same development potential compared to what could currently occur under the General Plan. Since this increased population is consistent with County General Plan buildout projections, it is also consistent with SLOCOG population projections, which are based on General Plan buildout assumptions.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are required.

Significance after Mitigation. Impacts would be less than significant.

## **5.3 REMOVAL OF OBSTACLES TO GROWTH**

The proposed Grading and Stormwater Management Ordinances would result in the same development potential compared to what could currently occur under the General Plan. Such growth would be less than significant, since it is consistent with County and regional long-term growth projections. Thus, development under the ordinances is not expected to be growth-inducing from this perspective. Modifications proposed under the proposed ordinances will strengthen existing requirements of non-agricultural development relative to erosion and sedimentation control and stormwater management.

Introduction of the agricultural exemption to the Coastal Zone could facilitate expansion of agricultural uses, such as crop production and grazing. These types of uses are anticipated in the rural areas of the county and are not necessarily indicative of population growth. To ensure that the agricultural exemption is not misused for non-agricultural development purposes, the ordinance proposes to incorporate the following features:



- Applicants will be required to fill out a form before conducting agricultural exempt work. Planning and Building Department staff will verify that a project can qualify for exemption.
- Agricultural roads and ponds processed under the alternative review program will require review by the Agricultural Commissioner. This review will ensure that roads and ponds to be constructed are commensurate with their agricultural necessity. Where the Agricultural Commissioner determines that such roads will have a capacity or function that would be greater than what would be reasonably needed to accommodate an existing or proposed agricultural use, such roads/ponds would require grading permit approval from the County.
- Roads processed under the alternative review program will be limited in width to 16 feet (including shoulders). Such roads would not meet the Cal Fire requirement for roads serving non-agricultural development, which would need to be 20 feet in width plus two-foot shoulders on either side.
- Pre-existing agricultural roads being proposed for a new non-agricultural use will require grading permit approval.

The above requirements will ensure that exempting agricultural activities will not inadvertently remove obstacles to future non-agricultural growth. Additionally, all Coastal Development Permit requirements that currently exist in the Coastal Zone will remain unchanged.

Mitigation Measures. None required.

Significance after Mitigation. Impacts would be less than significant.

